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(71) Applicants:
• **Caliper Life Sciences, Inc.**
Mountain View, CA 94043 (US)
• **Agilent Technologies, Inc.**
Palo Alto, CA 94303 (US)

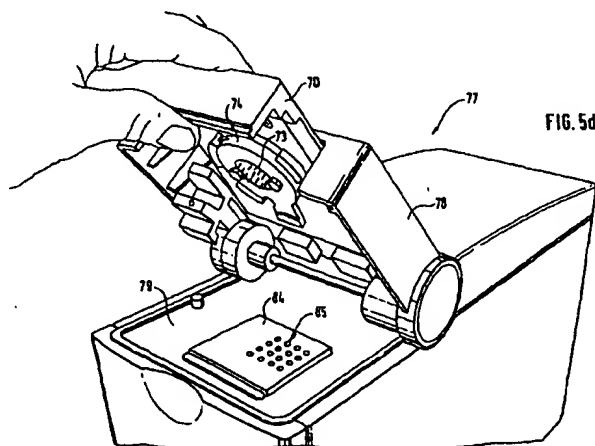
(72) Inventors:
• **Berndt, Manfred**
76337 Waldbronn (DE)
• **Kaltenbach, Patrick**
76476 Blischweiler (DE)
• **Kennedy, Colin B.**
Greenbrae, CA 94904-2442 (US)

(74) Representative: **Kiddle, Simon John et al**
Mewburn Ellis,
York House,
23 Kingsway
London WC2B 6HP (GB)

(54) **Apparatus for the operation of a microfluidic device**

(57) In a system for operation or handling of a laboratory micro chip (41) for chemical processing or analysis, the microchip (41) is mounted in a first physical unit (42). The microchip (41) is arranged on a mounting plate, such that it is readily accessible from the top and thus the fitting and removal of the microchip is considerably simplified. Furthermore, the first physical unit (42) comprises an optical device (43) for contactless detec-

tion of the results of the chemical processes conducted on the microchip. The supply systems necessary for the operation of the microchip are arranged in a module unit that has a separable connection with a second physical unit. The proposed modular layout enables ease of interchangeability of the required supply systems and thus, overall, ease of adaptability of the proposed system for various types of microchips.



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 18 March 2004	Examiner Koch, A
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 18 March 2004	Examiner Koch, A
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

- ☒ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:



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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION
SHEET B

Application Number
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The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. claims: 1-23,25

Device for operating a microchip, system for enabling plural microchips with different microfluidic configurations to be interchangeably used

2. claim: 24

Another system for enabling plural microchips with different microfluidic configurations having different supply element configurations to be interchangeably used

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

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